

TRANSTEC



EL SALVADOR & GUJARAT

EVALUATION

OF ECHO RELIEF OPERATIONS

IN FAVOUR OF THE VICTIMS

**OF THE EARTHQUAKES IN JANUARY-FEBRUARY
2001**

SYNTHESIS FINAL REPORT

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Evaluated intervention

ECHO has commissioned the evaluation of two emergency humanitarian interventions to relief victims of earthquakes that occurred in El Salvador and in Gujarat, India, in January-February 2001.

Date of the evaluation

The evaluation was carried out from 22/03/2002 to 01/04/2002 in El Salvador and from 07/04/2002 to 16/04/2002 in India. A briefing was organised at Brussels HQ from 26/02/02 to 01/03/02, and the debriefing from 30/05/02 to 31/05/02.

Name of the consultants

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Purpose and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to obtain information for improvement of actions and strategies in similar emergency situations, through the comparison of two similar humanitarian crises, which gave birth to different responses in the two countries.

The evaluation team was made up of two consultants, one focusing on the health sector, the other on the watsan and shelter sector.

This report is the synthesis of the two sector reports.

The team had briefings in Brussels at ECHO HQ, at ECHO offices and EC Delegations both in Central America and in India. It also met partners at their HQ in Europe, in Central America and in India, met national and local authorities in El Salvador and in India, and visited community leaders and beneficiaries at the places of ECHO intervention, in order to collect information and recommendations from all stakeholders. Debriefings were held with ECHO officers, EC Delegations and some partners at the end of the visits in both countries, in order to refine perception. Intermediate reports, seeking comments, were sent to ECHO field experts in both countries. Other data and documents were collected on the web throughout the process. Only 15 projects have been analysed from a total of 40; the team does not claim that they constitute a statistical sample.

Main findings

It is rather hard to compare the two countries, given the huge size of India vs. El Salvador. The tiny State of Gujarat is ten times larger than El Salvador, and even the district of Kutchhh, the main theatre of the earthquake damage, is twice as large. The following table gives some useful data for each country, reduced partially for comparison purpose to Gujarat only, when broken-down data were available.

	India	El Salvador
Economic data (for the year 2000)		
GSDP/capita (€)	512	2,255
Exports to the EU (M €)	13,383	667
Share of the EU total imports (%)	1.4	0.1
Imports from the EU (M €)	12,366	183
Share of the EU total exports (%)	1.2	0.02
Grants and loans from EU (M €)	285.97	25.31
Share of EU grants & loans per capita (€)	0.26	4.02
	Gujarat	El Salvador
Demographic data		
Density (persons/km ²)	244	299.9
Urban population (%)	34	28
Infant mortality rate (‰)	64	32
Birth rate (‰)	25.4	27.7
Death rate (‰)	7.9	6.1
Living standards		
Population below poverty level (%)	24	41
Literacy rate (%)	75	83
Rural access to improved sanitation (%)	14	78
Rural access to improved drinking water (%)	86	61

Extent of damage		
Dead	20,000	1,149
Injured	167,000	8,056
Homes damaged or destroyed	1,000,000	325,000
Health centres & hospitals destroyed	1200	150
Schools destroyed or severely damaged	11,600	962
Dams damaged	240	53
Population affected	15.7 M persons (41.5 %)	1.53 M persons (25 %)
ECHO funds released for the relief		
Total grant (M €)	13	10
Amount per victim (€)	0.83	6.54

The first set of figures displays macro-economic data, which may provide the clues required for an answer to the difference in treatment given by the EC services in each country. The imports of El Salvador from the EU are ridiculously small (68 times less than India and 0.02 % of total EU exports) and its foreign trade with the EU is totally unbalanced. Hence the permanence of ECHO aid in El Salvador a year after the quake, the higher external assistance (16 times more per capita than India) and humanitarian aid (eight times more per victim than India) may be incentives to purchase more European commodities. But other factors may also explain the difference. The second set of figures (demographic, living standards) shows great similarities between the two countries, except in three cases. The infant mortality rate is twice as high in India as in El Salvador and sanitation in rural areas is five times lower - this explains that. The compared GSDP/capita figures set against the poverty rates clearly illustrate different conceptions of sharing out the national wealth, i.e. of governance.

The third set of figures shows the extent of the damage in both countries. These data underscore the greater damage in India than in El Salvador, although the magnitude of the quake was smaller. The last set of figures indicates that ECHO's response was uneven, with each victim in El Salvador receiving eight times more than the equivalent Indian victim.

Qualitatively, ECHO's response was different in each country. The following table documents the sectors that were covered by ECHO-funded relief.

Aid budget breakdown by sector (in %)						
Sector	Watsan	Health	Rehabilitation	Shelter	First need items	Disaster preparedness
Country						
El Salvador	22	21	10	25	6	6
Gujarat	6	20	0	55	19	0

The differences observed in the quantity as well as in the quality of the relief offered to each country can partially be explained by the differences in each country's context. Both have very different methods of governance, which affected the way relief serviced them.

The Indian system of government is traditionally democratic, and co-operates with the national Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the development of the country. El Salvador still only has a formally democratic system and the government is at odds with the local NGOs. The Indian government is very independent and does not tolerate interference by outsiders, which include INGOs. The Salvadorian government, very dependent on foreign capital, welcomes INGOs. When confronted with the disaster, the Indian government did not ask for foreign assistance, and used its own funds to organise responsibly the relief and planning of reconstruction. The Salvadorian government appealed for international assistance and allocated the management of the relief process to prominent personalities of the national private sector, and this logically generated inflation on food and building material. The relief was distributed evenly by the Indian government, whilst in El Salvador municipalities belonging to the ruling party received more relief than the others. So, in India, the local government and CSOs, who were well organised, did not need any foreign help, and few European INGOs could be found to implement foreign-funded relief projects. In El Salvador, the population in the municipalities run by the opposition parties needed this help funnelled by the INGOs because the government relief was uneven.

The diversity of medical projects in El Salvador stems from the presence in the country of several INGOs dedicated to health. In Gujarat, the destruction of all medical facilities justified

the concentration of all ECHO's health activities on an Emergency Response Unit (ERU) referral hospital.

The absence of any meaningful watsan activity in India stems from the locals' full coverage of the water provision, and the futility of any emergency sanitation project in the country.

The difference in shelters delivered in each country (hard-built shelters in El Salvador, mainly tents in Gujarat) is also due to the context. In El Salvador the endemic violence made walls and a lockable door a necessity. In India, security and respect of others' property prevail. Tents were the best shelters, protecting against the cold wind, the burning sun and monsoon showers, for the short period of time before the government's reconstruction programme could start.

In general, the consultant considers that ECHO's intervention in both countries was appropriate and benefited the earthquakes victims. The following table summarises the results of ECHO funding in each sector.

		El Salvador		Gujarat			
		Result	Problems faced		Result	Problems faced	
			Suggested solutions			Suggested solutions	
Water provision	Short term	Good			Good		
	Long term	Mixed	Stopping of supply in new settlements	Commitment of local institutions or authorities.	NE		
Sanitation	Short term	Good			Good		
	Long term	Mixed	No delivery of material; no use of facility; stopping of education.	Improved monitoring; improved education; commitment of local partners.	Mixed	No maintenance of public latrines; no continuous education component; no use of public facilities.	Delivery of the same facilities to schools only with ad hoc curricula.
Shelter	Short term	Good				Generally Good	Delays in delivery and (few) narrowness.
	Long term	Mixed	No delivery of land titles; risk of landslides.	Strong advocacy from EC delegations; better choice of resettlement locations.	Good		Delays in execution
Health	Short term	Good				Good	
First need items	Short term	Good			Good		
	Mid term	Good			Good		
Food aid and food security	Short term	Good			NE		
	Mid term	Good	More seeds needed.		NE		

Analysis of ECHO's response to both events

Relevance

ECHO's response in Decision I was very relevant in both countries. Decision II was also relevant, regarding the choice of sector activities and areas to be covered. They complemented other actors' relief assistance, targeting the most vulnerable. In El Salvador, a problem - land-ownership in the case of in situ reconstruction - modified slightly the class of

shelter beneficiaries, and the choice of a couple of partners was not very relevant. In Gujarat, the choice of one sector¹ and a couple of partners was not relevant, relatively to the local context.

Effectiveness

In both countries, ECHO's response was effective and the victims received the services planned. Few problems hampered the global effectiveness. In El Salvador, one partner was unable to deliver all the planned shelters and latrines. In Gujarat, one partner¹ was unable to reach its goals.

Efficiency

In both countries, ECHO's reaction was swift and responded immediately to the first emergency. However, some delays in the post-emergency contract delivery hampered some partners, and the absence of an ECHO office in the country did not allow perfect monitoring at the first stage and resulted sometimes in casualness. The efficiency of a couple of partners unaware of the local context, or unused to emergency or working in a new field of activity, was questionable beforehand and they showed weakness in their project implementation. Non-observance of deadlines and then a shifting in the length of the contracts stemmed from the same cause. Cost-effectiveness was also debatable in a few cases. In Gujarat, a much-debated shelter project, due to changes in planning and long delays in completion, belonged in fact to the rehabilitation phase and had not initially been at start appraised as such.

Impact

In both countries, ECHO's intervention mitigated the victims' suffering, giving its beneficiaries the immediate relief needed and a minimal space from where they could reorganise their lives.

In El Salvador, ECHO's actions - together with the active presence of the EC Managua Delegation - favoured a new enhanced visibility for the EU. Regarding the shelter project, an unplanned impact was the foreseeable permanency of new slums, which were intended to be temporary, and the prospect of hazard or social conflicts or increased vulnerability in resettlements not properly chosen or not supported by any further development project.

In Gujarat, the EU's visibility was not ensured at a higher level than the field, due to unawareness of the local context and insufficient communications with other local or international partners. An unplanned effect, the dependency of recipients, resulted from the wrong targeting and non-participative ways of delivering services used by one partner¹.

Sustainability and connectedness

In both countries, many victims, partially relieved by ECHO or other donors' assistance, have not yet been able to restore their livelihood. Several goods and services delivered during the post emergency phase needed, in order to be fruitful, to be subsequently complemented. Although in both countries EC services and partners were active to move on from relief to rehabilitation, meagre results were obtained due to a lack of appropriate instruments at the ECHO and AIDCO levels. However, some partners have succeeded in filling the gap, either with their own funds, or with ECHO funds, but have not kept to the agreed timeframe.

Conclusions and recommendations

Modalities of project management

The EC's immediate response in creating an emergency field cell was very appropriate, but the efficiency of such a unit could be improved if it also brought together ECHO experts and partners. ECHO's efficiency was slightly hampered by the absence of a permanent ECHO

¹ This concerns one partner's project out of 17 other projects.

officer in each country, as well as by too many changes in HQ personnel, insufficient communication with other stakeholders, and by a questionable choice of few partners.

In order to improve EC services, as well as the capacity of ECHO and partners to focus on such issues, the mission recommends:

- *creating, in the case of a serious natural disaster, an information and co-ordination emergency cell that includes some EC project personnel, ECHO personnel and personnel from ECHO's traditional partners in the country*
- *dispatching immediately an ECHO officer for planning and monitoring in the country for the whole duration of operations responding to the crisis*
- *improving communication and co-ordination with other international or local actors*
- *investing more in preparedness during and after the post-emergency activities*
- *selecting among the partners those that have a presence in the country, or those connected to local network associates able to operate immediately, and those who have proven experience in the chosen field of activity, plus those who are experienced in emergency situations*
- *paying more attention during the appraisal of projects to the context and to effective targeting*
- *improving monitoring with the use of relevant indicators.*

Emergency and post-emergency decisions

The first relief activities, which respond to the temporary impairment of local structures, must rely on local organised partners to be efficient. Their fields of action are emergency health care, provision of drinking water, food, cooking utensils and protection against bad weather.

The post-emergency response - covering the needs for mid-term temporary shelter, continuous access to water, protection against disease, restoration of livelihood, and disaster preparedness - has to fit the local ecological, cultural and political environment.

The mission recommends that:

- *Decision I allocates funds only to efficient National Red Cross (NRC) partners and/or to INGOs well established in the country suffering from the disaster*
- *Decision I covers only the medical emergency and the immediate needs of victims*
- *Decision II chooses carefully the sectors of intervention, after thorough analysis of the local constraints*
- *Sectors chosen by Decision II should preferably be able of continuity under other EC services funding.*

Victims of the earthquakes

The relief has improved the lot of the victims, but their vulnerability remained after the emergency operations. Their livelihoods have not been restored and many have not recovered access to the minimum social services.

The mission recommends that, in the case of resettlement in compact communities

- *an agreement should be signed, before delivering the facilities to the local authorities, for a continuation of social services after the departure of ECHO partners*
- *land titles delivery should preferably be granted by local authorities before starting to build shelters in new settlements*
- *a strong advocacy should at least be developed by the EC Delegation encouraging the local governments to deliver the land titles quickly and free of charge.*

The mission recommends also that the issue of restoration of livelihood should be addressed in the post-emergency phase and that it should be linked to mid-term projects to be developed in the rehabilitation phase by other EC services and implemented by local or international CSOs.

Shelters

ECHO partners provided a large variety of shelters to victims, ranging from very low to excellent quality.

The mission recommends that:

- *a thorough analysis of personnel and cultural family needs should be carried out before any planning of shelter construction*
- *minimal standards on prices, material and space provided should be imposed on partners involved in the building process*
- *tents should be standardised in order to cope with bad weather and to give ample shelter to families.*

Water and sanitation

WATSAN structures, as well as their social and environmental accompanying measures, cannot just be delivered as a parcel. Sustainability must be sought in their delivery.

The mission recommends that:

- *a commitment should be required from local authorities to carry on the water provision in compact resettlements' water networks*
- *the latrines provided in definitive settlements should be designed for the long-term and therefore of good quality and fully completed*
- *the hygiene education provided should be extended through the education system and the development of awareness in community groups.*

Health

The greatest impact in ECHO's funded health package was obtained in the treatment of trauma directly resulting from the earthquakes. The other health activities in post-emergency are not really connected to the relief of the victims.

The mission recommends in the case of earthquakes:

- *generalising the funding of Emergency Response Units (ERU), as set up through the co-operation of European NRCs*
- *extending psychological support through training and dissemination of psychological assistance methods to community workers, school masters or local Red Cross volunteers in the framework of DIPECHO mitigation activities*
- *focusing on selective and specialised health interventions.*

Linking Relief to Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD)

The LRRD issue was addressed in both countries by local EC Delegations, but the result obtained was not conducive to an effective linkage between the relief and the rehabilitation phases.

For that purpose, the mission recommends:

- *improving the communication channels between ECHO and other EC services, and especially the Delegation*
- *planning of relief projects, with good synergy between EC services, and in accordance with local specifications and constraints, that can be continued in the rehabilitation phase*
- *funding CSOs already present in the relief operations with mid-term rehabilitation projects*
- *improving the quality and swiftness of AIDCO response in the case of post-disaster rehabilitation proposals, or creating a new instrument², at the level of ECHO or AIDCO, able to respond quickly to rehabilitation programme proposals*
- *planning at AIDCO level of long-term development programmes following that wave.*

² See appendix VIII for more details.

Visibility

ECHO's visibility overshadowed the EU's visibility at field level. Poor communication and an unawareness of local sensitivity overshadowed both at a higher level in India.

The mission recommends that the EU's visibility signs should be the same as those of ECHO, that the presence of EC experts should be more active at all levels of aid co-ordination, that communication should be improved at all levels, and that more attention should be paid to local sensitivity in the choice of partners.

Lessons learned

The rapidity of decision-taking can hamper the appraisal of projects and consequently their impact and sustainability.

Changes in projects can be used to hide unsightly things.

Working with communities with a participative approach ensures sustainability.

Involvement of local authorities reinforces transparency and democracy and empowers beneficiaries.

In times of disasters, government authorities, whatever their political bias, need to be reinforced in the sectors showing weakness: a positive approach like this ensures improved co-operation in the future.

The participation of women at all levels of relief gives them more visibility and empowerment.

The visibility of donors is not proportionate to the size of their grants.

A STRATEGY FOR NATURAL DISASTERS

To summarise the experience acquired through this evaluation, the consultant proposes a few strategic steps to be taken to handle natural disaster relief and to link the humanitarian relief to broader rehabilitation and development activities in the field of the disaster. It should be recalled that, even though the events are natural, usually the damage done is the result of human mismanagement. Henceforth, rehabilitation and development should be carried out with a view to building-up the physical, social and political structures, in order to avoid the man-made consequences of disasters. The following steps concern the EC services in general.

- Establishment of DIPECHO and other similar AIDCO programmes in countries or areas prone to natural disasters, with two main themes: preparedness for mitigation, diminution of vulnerability
- As soon as a large-scale disaster occurs, establish an ECHO officer in the field, and a crisis cell, including EC TA, an ECHO officer and EC partners, in order to concentrate and dispatch information, to co-operate and co-ordinate with all other national or international partners, and to prepare a consistent response
- Planning by this crisis cell of a post-emergency response, together with rehabilitation mid-term programmes in the same field as those addressed by post-emergency activities
- Creation, at ECHO or AIDCO level, of a new instrument² able to respond swiftly to the rehabilitation phase programme, avoiding long research consultancies and tender processes
- Preparation of development programmes that broaden the scope of the rehabilitation phase, with the goal of eradicating vulnerability to the disaster in question.